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## ON REREADING MEREDITH

There is almost absolute truth in the statement made by Mr. William Watson that every intelligent reader is born either a Meredithian or an anti-Meredithian. There are few instances of readers who grow to like the work of George Meredith; people are startled and held by his genius at first acquaintance or feel a repugnance they never are able to argue away. There are no half-way measures in liking or disliking this author's books.

He published for the first time in the middle of the nineteenth century, but nearly thirty years passed before any large amount of recognition and appreciation was granted him. His early books were liked by the few people who were far enough advanced to have acquired a nature to which Meredith could appeal. This group was small; its number has increased but slowly. The whole development of life since 1850, however, has been to make a different kind of men and women from the kind of the years before that date. There is about most men now a virility, in their thoughts at least, that Meredith pointed out and foreshadowed in his early books, because he knew that this quality must grow in us. We have not yet gone so far in the training of our manly compositions as Meredith would have us; we are far from realizing the ideals he holds up for women. "Ideals," we call them now; for in our present state of society the freedom of thought and action that this novelist asks for women in his books and in the world is far away. Considered rationally and abstractly all he desires, with seeming hope too, is right, proper, and natural.

It is not always safe to ascribe to a writer every opinion he expresses in a book. We know, however, that Meredith has declared more directly than through a novel some of his personal views concerning marriage. Though in his novels he draws vivid pictures, presents difficult situations, delineates powerful characters, we feel that he has probably held his mirror up to nature only to smile at the people who gaze into it so anxiously. He wrote great novels of real life with hints of how real life

should grow to ideal life; merely saying, by way of grim comment, "This is what you are, and this is what you should be; but there is no hope that you will, or even can, pass from one condition to the other." There is not a novel which does not show, either in its main plot or in some minor episodes, the hollowness, the meanness, the pettiness of our usual mode of existence. Coupled with such delineation is always the hint that things might be different, but there is no novel that proves or shows that matters would be any better in the state toward which we hope we are moving. Even Meredith's philosophers are disappointing. They are comfortable people, after all, who always conform, daring as they may appear. His young heroes, likewise, begin with wonderful plans for changing, if not bettering, the world. In some instances they go so far as to make a beginning; but a woman, a parliamentary seat, a business, turns their views topsy-turvy as they grow only a few years older.

From the standpoint of realism and fidelity to nature a reader can find no fault with the philosophers and heroes in these novels; from the standpoint of ethical renovation and optimistic idealism alone can he declare himself disappointed. As no reader expects the world to be re-created by anyone except philosophers and heroes he accepts unquestioningly the women and boys of Meredith,—his great creations. Refreshing is the boyishness of his boys; lovable the womanhood of his women. Though the author is a realist in his delineation of his women, he is a philosopher in his attitude toward them. He always reproduces women as they appear to him, but he always gives hints of what they would be, were it not for man and his unenlightened selfishness. "In his delineation of them," declares Mr. Le Gallienne, "his fearless adoption of the modern conception of the unity of body and spirit finds its poetry. No writer with whom I am acquainted has made us so realize the value and significance of flesh, and spirit as the flower of it. In his women we seem to see the transmutation in process."

The women in these books who save themselves do so in every instance by a sudden act of determination — an act that in real life would mean scandal. These impetuous, seemingly rash, flauntings in the face of a dignified, prim society are necessary

because "women are in the position of inferiors. They are hardly out of the nursery when a lasso is thrown around their necks." From *The Pilgrim's Script* of Sir Austin Feverel the novelist quotes, "I suspect that woman will be the last thing civilized by man." These sentences show the attitude of men to women which Meredith so much deploras.

As Meredith is realistic in treatment he is dramatic in method. His characters having been drawn with certain natures and finished with appropriate habits are placed in a situation; then the action begins. Time and time again the author declares in his novels that he has merely brought together and started his people; that they are making their own history, a history in which for any unexpected freak of theirs he disclaims any responsibility. A hero in a book is, after all, a man; a man moved, as are all men in and out of books, by an inexorable Fate (so we ignorantly call it) manifested in circumstances about him or in an impulsive, vacillating mind within him. All the stories are comedies, or tragi-comedies, of that inner partly even subconscious life, that he indicates rather than depicts. The dramatic designs are broad and spacious, conveying an impression of magnitude which the finished work never equals. The first plan of a story is always larger than the written novel. The feeling of restriction is likely due to a lack of graceful ease in telling the story, a lack caused less by inability than by a conscious ingenuity in style applied to a method of narration. This sense of restriction is prevalent in *Tragic Comedians*; while in the closing chapters of *The Egoist* events follow one another so rapidly and with so little apparent relation that the solution of the difficulty in which Sir Willoughby has placed himself is hard to follow.

In another sense Meredith has spaciousness. His knowledge and fancy can illuminate any subject, amplify any theme. In *The Egoist* he has an entire chapter on the remark of Mrs. Mountstuart, "You see, he has a leg." In *One of Our Conquerors* a speech of a passing man in the street contains the word "punctilio," and that one word is a reason for several paragraphs.

## II

Though even to-day the novels of Meredith are not read as are the novels of Dickens and those of Thackeray his name is widely known to the reading public because of his peculiar style. It is a curious fact that people who do not know by personal acquaintance one book can talk about his characteristic manner of expression. Because of their style, if because of no other reason, these novels should live. Meredith is not one of the class of writers who captivate readers on the first page by the ease of their style. The heraldic and hereditary matter which opens *Henry Esmond* is as nothing compared with the material with which Meredith's opening chapters are filled. In many instances the first division of a book is an introductory essay or preface. Were the chapter properly labelled no modern reader would peruse it at all. To dupe the unsuspecting into learning how, and why, and for what, this author incorporates his foreword into the scheme of the novel itself. Here in some cases the personal, in all cases the original, ideas of the novelist are set forth in language as strange as the subject-matter. Very often the first chapter need not be read at all to understand or enjoy the story. The prelude to *The Egoist* is entitled "A Chapter of Which Only the Last Page Is of Any Importance." In it one is introduced to "a certain big book, The Book of Egoism." Any ten lines of that prelude are sufficient to baffle the closest reader and average thinker the first time he reads them. The passage discusses science, art, comedy, tragedy, at times in the wildest terms, at other times in the homeliest metaphors. Many sentences are long and involved, some are apparently incomplete. The following passage does not yield much at a first reading:—

One, with an index on the book cries out, in a style pardonable to his fervency: "The remedy of your frightful affliction is here, through the stillatory of Comedy, and not in Science, nor yet in speed whose name is but another for voracity. Why, to be alive, to be quick in the soul, there should be diversity in the companion throbs of your pulses. Interrogate them. They lump along like the old loblegs of Dobbin the horse; or do their business-like cudgels of car-

pet thwackers expelling dust, or the cottage clock pendulum teaching the infant hour over midnight simple arithmetic. This too in spite of Bacchus. And let them gallop; let them gallop with the God bestriding them, gallop to Hymen, gallop to Hades, they strike the same note. Monstrous monotonousness has infolded us as with the arms Amphitrite! We hear a shout of war for a diversion. Comedy he pronounces our means of reading swiftly and comprehensively. She it is who proposes the correcting of Pretentiousness, of inflation, of dullness, and of the vestiges of rawness and grossness yet to be found among us. She is the ultimate civilizer, the polisher, a sweet cook. If, he says, she watches over sentimentalism with a birch rod, she is not opposed to romance. You may love, and warmly love, so long as you are honest. Do not offend reason."

*Diana of the Crossways* begins with a long account of Diaries, intelligible to only a few at first:—

Thousands have reflected on a Diarist's power to cancel our Burial Service. Not alone the cleric's good work is upset by him, but the sexton's as well. He hawks the graves, and transforms the quiet worms, busy on a poor single peaceable body, into winged serpents that disorder sky and earth with a deadly flight of zig-zags, like military rockets, among the living. And if these are given to cry too much, to have their tender sentiments considered, it cannot be said that history requires the flaying of them. A gouty Diarist, a sheer gossip Diarist, may thus, in the bequest of a trail of reminiscences, explode our temples (for our very temples have powder in store) our treasures, our homesteads, alive with dynamic stuff; nay, disconcert our inherited veneration, dislocate the ultimate connection between the tugged forelock and a title.

For such peculiar style, both of thought and expression,—one can ask no better example of peculiarity than the parenthetical remark in the second quotation,—more than for art in story telling or for skill in delineation of character is Meredith renowned. For once at least a great master of English was famous during his own lifetime for his use of his mother tongue. To say that he is a maker of epigrams and aphorisms is not to say all. He can write short, sharp sentences with worlds of meaning in them, but he can as skilfully carry an idea through dozens of closely

woven labyrinthine periods. He can write clearly and forcibly as in *The Amazing Marriage* or poetically and ornately as in *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*. He began as a poet, and he preserved the poet's fancy for words, and the power to use them.

The term Decadent cannot be applied to Meredith as it has been applied to Mallarmé, for instance, for his style has not become deliberately abnormal. Poet and philosopher as he is, his mind does not work as do the minds of ordinary people, in usual modes of expression. In this respect he resembles Carlyle. It is but natural that a man who believes that "you may start a sermon from stones to hit the stars" should think in unnatural forms; as he thinks, so will he write. His style may be as self-conscious as the style of Carlyle, but it is living, pulsing, vibrating in every fibre. It has vigor, strength, vitality, as much "real red blood" as have some of his characters. Like them, it commands attention, it wins admiration. "Our language," he writes, voicing the truth we all know, "our language is not rich in subtleties for prose. A writer who is not servile, and has insight, must coin from his own mind."

This does not mean that a man is at liberty to coin words, it does mean that a writer must coin phrases, collocations, turns of expression. It is original to say in ten words something on which a chapter may be written; it is original to play with a passing remark until it becomes the theme for an entire chapter. This may lead some to believe that Meredith, like his own Mrs. Mountstuart, is "mad for cleverness." This he cannot be, if he speaks with sincerity in judgment of Sir Austin Feverel. "A maker of proverbs — what is he but a narrow-mind, the mouth-piece of a narrower?" "A proverb is a half-way house to an idea, I conceive." A few additional sentences from *The Egoist* further illustrate this opinion, an opinion that few readers will apply to Meredith himself if they recall all he has seen and described, thought and told:—

"You see how easy it is to deceive one who is an artist in phrases. Avoid them, Miss Dale, they dazzle the penetration of the composer. That is why people of ability, like Mrs. Mountstuart, see so little; they are so bent on describing."

In nearly every novel there is, however, some maker of sentences, some artist in phrases. Sometimes this thought and word juggler merely utters his gems; at others, like the most famous "improvisers," he jots them down. Most of these aphorisms and epigrams have been collected into a volume entitled after the manuscript of Sir Austin Feverel, *The Pilgrim's Script*. One need merely open any novel to find some sentence worthy of memory and quotation, or some other equally striking mark of the author's genius in handling words. Even in the late work, *The Amazing Marriage*, which critics hailed as a return to simpleness, there are such sentences as this:—

That meteoric, intractable, perhaps wicked, but popular, reputedly clever, manifestly ill-starred, enormously wealthy, young Earl of Fleetwood, wedded to an adventuress, and a target for scandals emanating from the woman, was daily, without omission of a day, seen walking Picadilly pavement in company once more with the pervert, the Jesuit agent, that crafty Catesby of a Lord Feltre, arm in arm the pair of them, and uninterruptedly conversing, utterly unlike Englishmen.

Because of this barrier against his reader, because of the friction between the mind and the material, Meredith attracts. First of all, his style is a challenge; then it becomes a game, a pursuit with all the imagined pleasures of the chase. The thoughtful person realizes at once that here is much worth getting, procurable if striven for. He returns to the book, and reads; but reading, thinks. He resembles young Beauchamp, who, picking up a book by Carlyle, can make little sense of what he reads, knowing nothing of what the discussion means; but he feels that there is something in the book, something he intends to worm out of it. So few works of fiction stimulate to thought nowadays that a book with bones to it is a good feast after much buttered toast and sweet deserts. There may be faults in such a style, for it knows no rules, it is confined within no limits, it is often not entirely clear, it is sometimes ambiguous, it often repels. But "so refreshing at times is his obstinate originality that one is almost tempted, when reflecting on the tameness of lesser men, to extol his faults as added virtues."



## III

The list of Meredith's novels covers a long period of years, a wide range of material. It begins in the middle of the nineteenth century with novels that remind us of those written by Thackeray; it concludes at the dawn of the twentieth century with studies unlike any books produced by contemporaries. The list makes an impression commensurable with that made by the titles of the works of the novelist's great poet brother, Algernon Charles Swinburne. It is the good work of a life. A statement made by an English critic recently may be correct: that after *Evan Harrington* had been published, and the public had failed to "make any recognition of a truly chivalric effort to pleasure it," Meredith punished it for its dense stupidity. "Just as Lamb said to himself, 'Damn the Age! I will write for posterity'; so Meredith began to think, 'Hang the public! I will write for Balliol and Trinity. I will keep my illumination for Benedick's college of wit-crackers, or the scholars' cloister.'" This does not lessen the greatness of the later works. Their very disregard of the desires of the fickle public taste, their very defiance of the "give-us-this-or-we-won't-buy" ultimatum, their very appeal to wit-crackers and scholars, to thinkers and educated men, make them all better now, will preserve them in the future from the fate of quick-selling novels. Their author, in refusing to watch his public, could fix his eyes more intently on his characters to reproduce them; could keep his mind more sincerely loyal to his own convictions to express himself. Lovers of Meredith are not disturbed by any reputation their author may be accorded; nor are they fearful that the lapse of years will diminish the stimulating influence of his novels in the minds of men and women, in the life of our slowly advancing society.

Stimulating these books are, as no mere stories depending on plot or incident ever could be. It is not that the day of great action is past, but because the day of greater thought has arrived, that swash-buckling romances, and tales of travel and adventure are now the first steps in the reading education of people, instead of the last, as was the case one hundred years ago, when literary fiction was furnished by Scott, Byron, and later Bulwer-Lytton.

It must be granted that in several of Meredith's novels there is an almost woful lack of plot, that in others there is no novelty of story. All this may be granted because so much remains to render these books worth reading, worth studying, worth thinking about. Great these novels are, not because of their stories, but because of their wonderful character delineations,—portraits of both men and women.

In these books the protagonists are not models, they are not ideals. In nearly all cases they are tragic-comedians, a class whom their describer defines simply as self-deceivers, overwrought egoists; men who have so little saving grace of humor that their self-centred minds take too seriously their own lives. They are all grand pretenders, so skilled in acting that they gaze at themselves with the eyes of spell-bound spectators, ready, only too ready, to applaud their graceful, mincing stepping, keeping time to what they consider the divine music of the spheres played for them, and them alone. Had these men any comic sense—one is tempted to say common sense—they would be consummate jesters, fooling the big booby of the world perhaps, but never without a twinkle in the eye, a twitch at the corners of the mouth, a toss of the head, to the other humorists who would notice and understand. Lacking this general ethical grace of humor, what follies these prim, correct, goodly men commit;—all of them, from Sir Austin Feverel, through Sir Willoughby to Wilfrid Pole. They are all aristocrats, too, unredeemed for their seriousness by any purpose of work and usefulness in the world; too well educated to be good animals, led by the demands of natural desire or repugnance. Their love even is not born of passion, of a desire for the flesh; but on some sickly requirements of good appearance before the world, amid the social circle, with the family. They would curb, restrain, deliberate, reason, consider; never so much as dreaming that one single hour of enthusiastic, nay, even rash, action is worth an age of sentimental dawdling. Beside these men sham and sentimentality stalk as the guardian angels of society. "Let us live," they might pray, "but make us weak enough never to violate propriety." So they are puling even in their sentimentality, carrying their practice of it further than women.

If the women of the world were only strong enough, only insistent enough, they might make such men see themselves as others see them. Their women admirers, their female educators might save them, for invariably a woman detects the weakness of the man she may at first merely like, or later, really love. After all her years of footstool worship, does not Letitia Dale know Sir Willoughby for what he really is? Is it not she rather than anyone else who furnishes the clue to her suitor's nature? Is it not she who pronounces the judgment of all men and women on his life, when she offers him the humiliation of a marriage without love? Not to ask other questions the answers to which are obvious, but to state other instances, it is Clara who first rebels against the stifling influence of the egoist. One uses the word "stifling" here as naturally as Meredith himself used it in describing the feeling Diana had for her first husband. That stilted paragon of modern knighthood, whom one almost prays to see impelled by a propulsion from the toe of Fate, Sir Austin Feverel, is understood by that long-suffering novice, Mrs. Blanchard.

All these men fail to win any sympathy for the same reason that they fail in their lives. They are not commonly human. All of them lack the comic sense. Though Meredith has been called "Shakesperean," the word cannot mean that he resembles the dramatist in his power of humorous situation or comic delineation. Meredith's ideal of comedy is different from that of the dramatist; in fact, from the usual ideal of all Anglo-Saxons who have acquiesced in following the great playwrights of the Elizabethan age rather than those of the Restoration period. Meredith's ideal may be gathered in part from *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, *The Egoist*, *Tragic Comedians*; or more clearly from the *Essay on Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit* (1877). If one exclaims after reading some of the novels, "I feel as though some one had slapped me in the face," he will be pleased to find in this essay the sentence, "The laughter of satire is a blow in the back or the face." There is no denying that to appreciate what Meredith calls real comedy one must be intellectually trained. May it be spoken aloud? To really smile — one cannot laugh outright at genuine comedy — over Meredith's

novels one must be mentally somewhat aristocratic. No one can doubt this when he hears the novelist turned critic exclaim, "O for a breath of Aristophanes, Rabelais, Voltaire, Cervantes, Fielding, Molière!" His idea of true comedy is that exhibited by the satire, the comedy of manners.

Because these men, therefore, have not the satiric attitude toward the world, including themselves, they make us merely pity, without commiserating. It were a thousand times better for them that, lacking this spirit, they should be purely pagan and natural, for then they could be more sincerely, more consistently men. The frankly animal seldom shocks or repels a thinking man or woman. In these novels there is a refreshing acceptance of the flesh — not coupling therewith the world and the devil — and the power and charm of the flesh for men and women. An open-mindedness so free as this flashes a ray of pure white light on Richard with Lady Mountfalcon, on Beauchamp with Renée, on Diana with Dacier, on Matey in the water with Browney — all set in wonderful expositions of the charm of the sensuous and the sensual.

From these pages may be made a gallery of women to hang opposite the collection from the poems of Tennyson; beside the gallery from the plays of Shakespeare. One cannot think of any man in these books without recalling at once some woman as a result of whose life or character that man is developed into nobleness, degraded into indolence, betrayed into self-discovery. These women have been called "crucible" women — a rather degrading metaphor taken from a science that deals with gross materials to be applied to a life that reflects the spiritual and mental — because they try the men they come in contact with, try them in the fire to purify them, try them in the fire to reduce them to dross. Because of a girl Richard Feverel becomes a self-reliant man, while his father proves himself an unsympathetic misunderstanding hobbyist. Vittoria displays to the world — although never quite clearly to himself, more's the pity — the arrogance, the sentimental unsteadiness of Wilfrid Pole; Jenny makes Beauchamp quietly strong; Rose induces Evan Harrington to make a fool of himself over and over again; Clothilde spurs Alvan on to court his ruin. Lord Willoughby

owes his unmasking first to Clara Middleton, then to Letitia Dale. Vernon Whitford and Matey Weyburn, poor pedagogues though they are, are given the opportunity to show themselves true men because they have the approbation of two noble women. These women, all of them, to which many of the minor characters may be added, from the buxom, bustling Mrs. Berry to the faithful Madge, constitute a gallery that few novelists can equal.

At this point the figure breaks down, for these people are not mere portraits in a gallery; they are living beings in the everyday world—not outlined profiles on white paper, not flat flesh tints on canvas, not even daguerreotypes in cases, not crayons on the walls, not photographs in albums—they are women in the home, on the train, in the ballroom, in the parlor, at country picnics, in continental cities, in fact, everywhere. No one has ever suggested an illustrated edition of Meredith's novels. Could any artist improve our own picture of Mrs. Berry pulling off her own wedding ring for Richard to marry Lucy? Could any book illustrator draw for us Clara Middleton, "a dainty rogue in porcelain"? Who wants any more vivid picture of Lady Mountfalcon than the novelist himself draws? This power of the writer, this power of fixing vividness in words, of forcing reality into print, is so apparently one of his greatest merits that an entire study might be made of it alone. We believe this faculty to be keener at seizing fine shades, in appreciating subtleties of the characters and dispositions of women than it is in grasping these same things in the natures of men. Men's characters offer few chances of nice discrimination, it is true; and Meredith may not have attempted in this instance a feat he may have considered unnecessary. When he does need to delineate the delicate nuances of men's feelings he does it, we believe, better than other novelists, but not quite so well as when he treats women. Meredith approaches more nearly to Shakespeare through the characters of his women than he does through the characters of his men—though, of course, the approach in this single detail leaves a wide gap. We consider this statement more fitly applicable to Meredith than to M. Maeterlinck, of whom it has been unreservedly hinted by many reviewers, and positively asserted by more than one critic.

Realizing that it is an ungracious, as well as an ungrateful, task to group the characters of an author in distinctive classes nicely labelled, we believe that all readers can distinguish a change among people conceived by the same mind during a period of fifty years. We may not insist on any acceptance of the change we are about to indicate, therefore we shall do hardly more than indicate it. This development of the natures of heroines can be made plainer by a comparison with three women delineated by M. Maeterlinck. Mélisande in *Pelléas et Mélisande* loves naturally, simply; we shall add, thoughtlessly; yet none the less entirely, forgetfully, passionately. Joyzelle, in the drama of the same name, loves in all three ways except thoughtlessly. She knows what her love for Lancéor means, she really understands every word that Merlin speaks to her. Yet she loves naturally, simply, entirely, forgetfully, passionately. Monna Vanna is an older woman than either Joyzelle or Mélisande; she loved simply, naturally, thoughtlessly as a girl; but that love was long ago, was almost forgotten. When she loves again, she loves as a woman. She loves Prinzwallé not thoughtlessly, not forgetfully, not unknowingly.

The heroines of many of the novels of Meredith suggest a similar intention. Lucy in *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* loves Richard passionately; this youth was all mankind to her. Even her maternity, to her only a part of her affection, she almost forgets, much to the pompous regret of Sir Austin. She is not unlike Tennyson's Elaine who died for love of Lancelot, though any comparison accords the superiority to the novelist. In both these sweet young girls there is only one love — the first desire in youth that can be satisfied only with what it demands, that can survive no loss.

The women of the later novels are foreshadowed by Diana who, according to the estimate already quoted from the book, has all the girlish qualities changing to those of the woman. She is endowed with all the impetuosity of the admirer, the steadfastness of the lover, but in addition all the knowledge, independence, intelligence of the mature woman. She furnishes none of the "sweet sensual excitement pertaining to her spotless rival"; her appeal is by another channel, "she

knocks at the mind and the mind must open to be interested in her."

It is through this same channel that the women of the later novels make their appeal. Their lovers open their minds to become interested in Clara, Aminta, and Carinthia, who love not alone where fancy leads; even before their hearts are aware of any choice being made, they pour out their wealth of affection before the men their own minds choose. Peculiarly each woman makes a mistake in a first choice; Clara is dazzled by the egoistic halo about Sir Willoughby, Aminta admires a far-off hero in Lord Ormont, Carinthia makes a supposedly brilliant match. They followed too blindly the advice of their romantic hearts, they did not love with enough mind. From the standpoint of the world, which considers only the material conditions of the men they later choose, how little romance, how small a chance for real love in a life bound with that of a schoolmaster, as Clara's and Aminta's are bound, or with the life of the widower of a former friend, as the life of Carinthia is bound! Not great matches, these, from a material aspect, surely;—but great in mutual confidence, in mutual sacrifice, in common purpose. These noble, clear-browed, straight-in-the-eye women must have beamed with a kindliness, a quickness, a humor, worthy of Meredith's best-loved immortal, the Muse of the Comic Spirit herself.

#### IV

As Meredith has not clearly explained his idea of Fate we dare not read our own opinions into his utterances. For the future, he bids us strive on to some better condition of society, a condition he suggests by showing its need, not its nature. He would have all of us working like his own good teachers and schoolmasters, "plowing to make a richer world."

Pausing for an instant to apply Coleridge's dictum of æsthetic criticism, what are the portions of these novels that we recall most vividly, that we return to with greatest pleasure? The scenes that are remembered best are lyrical in nature, or in treatment—the product of the poet. Longest perhaps will remain that scene of budding love in Richard Feverel and Lucy.

Two other incidents from the same book come to mind; the winning of the hero by the beautiful erring Lady Mountfalcon; and Richard's lonely night in the German mountains, finding peace after storm in the sense of protection over the little coney. The passionate love scenes of Emilia will not soon fade away, contrasted as they are so vividly with Wilfrid Pole's weakness in affection. In *Beauchamp's Career* there is the beautiful dawn upon Venice. Finally, everyone who thinks of *Lord Ormont and His Aminta* feels the clasp of the waters and the warmth of the sun as Matey and Browney swim out to sea together.

It would be difficult to make an admirer of Meredith believe that he preaches a creed of pessimism, or loss of hope. What his faith is makes no difference, it has the spirit of true religion. Into the mouth of Diana he puts these comforting words for us to remember and cherish:—

“Who can really think, and not think hopefully? When we despair or discolor things it is our senses in revolt, and they have made the sovereign brain their drudge. There is nothing the body suffers that the soul may not profit by,—with that I sail into the dark; it is my promise of the immortal.”

CLARENCE STRATTON.

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